VIII. *Extract of a Letter concerning the Poiſon of* Henbane-Roots, *from Dr.* Patouillat, *Phyſician at* Toucy *in* France, *to M.* Geoffroy, *F.* R. S. *and Member of the* Royal Academy *of Sciences at* Paris, *communicated to the* ROYAL SOCIETY, London, *by Sir* Hans Sloane, *Med. Reg. and Preſ.* R. S. *Tranſlated from the* French *by* T. S. *M. D. F.* R. S.

February 9. 1737.

THE 26th of laſt Month, I was called to a Cottage very near *Toucy*; where I was ſurpriſed to find nine Perſons together, all having the true Symptoms of being poiſon'd; with this Difference, that ſome were ſpeechleſs, and ſhew'd no other Signs of Life than by Convulſions, Contortions of their Limbs, and the *Riſus Sardonicus*; all having their Eyes ſtarting out of their Heads, and their Mouths drawn backwards on both Sides; others had all the Symptoms alike. However, five of them did now and then open their Mouths, but it was to utter Howlings: And whenever they expreſs'd articulated Words, it ſeem'd as if they would propheſy. One, for Example, ſaid, In a Month my Neighbour will loſe a Cow: Another, In a little time you will ſee the Crown Pieces of ſixty Pence at five Livres [100 d.] Among theſe nine Perſons there was a Woman five Months gone with Child, a Child of two Years; four Boys of 9, 12, 15 and 18; and three Girls of 15, 17 and 19 Years of Age, who had all three the Misfortune

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fortune of the Green-ſickneſs upon them at that Juncture of Time. The Madneſs of all theſe Patients was ſo complete, and their Agitations ſo violent, that in order to give one of them the Antidote, I was forced to employ ſix ſtrong Men to hold him, while I was getting his Teeth aſunder, to pour down the Remedy: And as they could not all be watch'd at once, one of the Boys got away, and ran to a Pond 100 Paces from the Houſe, into which he leap'd; but as he was ſeen, he was ſoon taken out. You muſt be ſenſible, Sir, what Confuſion I was in at ſo preſſing a Juncture of Time.

'Twas vain to examine thoſe Wretches concerning the Nature of the Poiſon they had taken, as they were quite ſenſeleſs. Happily the Father of the Family, by being abſent, was free from this Misfortune. Of him I learn'd, that digging his Garden the preceding Day, he had found ſeveral Roots reſembling common *Parſnips*; and having carried them home for *Parſnips*, they were boil'd in the Soop; and the unlucky Miſtake was not apprehended, till the Children were in this dreadful State. He deſcribed to me the Plant, which he thought he had taken for *Parſnips*; whereupon I went into the Garden, in order to find and know what it was; but as it had no Leaves, I was obliged to derive the Knowledge of it from the Roots; and ſoon knew it to be the *Henbane*, which is a very ſtrong Poiſon; and ſo much the more dangerous, as the Patients could give no Account of their Ailments, nor of the Quality of the Poiſon they had taken.

To the Boys I gave the *Tartar. Stibiat.* in ſo large a Doſe, that the oldeſt took 45 Grains, and the others in Proportion.

For the Woman, I had recourſe to *Theriaca* in a triple Doſe; not thinking it ſafe to give her the Emetic, on account of her Pregnancy. I gave the ſame Remedy to the Child, by reaſon of its Tenderneſs.

To the Girls, beſides the *Theriaca*, which they took in very large Doſes, (having made uſe of four Ounces of it) I gave warm Milk, wherein I diſſolved *Salt of Rue.* The next Day I viſited the Patients, and found them in a quite different Condition; for they had all recover'd the Uſe of their Reaſon, but remember'd nothing of what happen'd.

All this Day, every Object appear'd double to them, that is, upon looking at a Man, a Beaſt, or a Tree, they ſaw two.

I return'd to ſee them the next Day, and found that the Symptoms were removed; but were ſucceeded by another altogether as ſurpriſing, to wit, all Objects appear'd to them as red as Scarlet. This laſt Symptom ceaſed gradually on the third Day, and ſince that Time they have made no Complaint.